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EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE HARVARD COLLEGE OF NURSING

THE announcement has been made in these pages that Harvard University was to establish a department of nursing, our information, published some little time ago, being that this new department was for the purpose of teaching nursing to medical students, not to nurses.

Now it seems to be conclusively decided that the new College of Nursing is to be for nurses, that it is to be a separate department, as are medicine, the law, etc., with a separate curriculum and a four-years' course that shall include hospital experience and private nursing.

That a great university like Harvard should open its doors to nurses is magnificent; that nursing is to become a dignified profession, with the recognition accorded the other learned professions, seems to be an assured fact. The dream that looked to be so far in the distant future may become a reality even while we are here to see the end.

Harvard's example will be followed, and other universities will establish departments of nursing.

It is too early to predict upon what general lines Harvard's Nursing College will be organized. From a broad outlook the whole plan must be most cordially commended by the nursing profession, but from a nearer standpoint we feel somewhat distrustful of the immediate result.

Dr. Alfred Worcester, of Waltham, who is to be at the head of the new Nursing College, holds views in regard to the training of nurses quite at variance with the great nursing body of this country, the older and leading women who have had experience as pupils and teachers, and from whom Dr. Worcester has taken the idea of a Nursing College.

The women of the greatest experience are convinced and stand

united in the opinion that a carefully arranged preliminary period is essential (this Dr. Worcester has had at Waltham), after which must come the methodical experience in the hospital wards, under most careful supervision and instruction from nurses skilled as teachers, before the pupil is sent into the homes of the people.

Dr. Worcester in his Training-School at Waltham has not considered hospital drill and experience the first essential, but has trained his nurses principally in the homes of the poor, where equipment and exact method are impossible.

The Massachusetts State Nurses' Association has refused to admit the Waltham nurses to membership, thus condemning Dr. Worcester's method of training.

Dr. Worcester is also opposed to the State registration of nurses, while the great nursing body of the United States stands united in favor of State registration.

The Harvard College of Nursing is then to have at its head a man opposed to the highest ideals of the nursing profession, while the prestige of the great university behind him places him in a position of power in nursing affairs unmerited either by service or experience.

It is not our intention, however, to assume a prejudiced attitude towards the Harvard plan. We agree in substance with a physician who has written us on the subject, from whose letter we quote:

"To reject new plans and projects because they do not fit in with our own experience is against progress. There is room for every kind of success on every line." (It may be demonstrated that Dr. Worcester's ideas are right and those of the great nursing body wrong.) "On the other hand, the much lauded 'learning to do by doing' may be carried too far if it means disregarding the world's experience. It is too costly to keep on repeating failures.

"Thinking people know that in the evolution of the modern nurse, the hospital has been the chief and most successful training-ground, and whatever bad traditions have crept into the new, yet old, profession have come along the lines of training being given in small or inadequate hospitals, poorly equipped in teachers and teaching facilities.

"In the case of the medical profession, on the other hand, fifty years ago a physician got his training in a doctor's office, learning to practice in the office and in the home where he was to carry out his life-work. He attended a few lectures and classes, and was then ready to begin for himself. There is no need to say that this system died out because it was inadequate. That good physicians were made by the old method no one questions. Neither does anyone question that the medical man to-day who is just graduating from one of the best medical schools

has had more experience and is better equipped than the man who had practised ten years under the old system." (The trend of medical progress is towards a compulsory hospital training for every medical student.) "This matter has been so fully settled in medical education that it is no longer an interesting point, but it becomes worthy of note when one sees the study of nursing threatened with the discarded methods of medical training.

"In the first place, the hospital and dispensary form the only places where the doctor or the nurse can obtain all kinds of experience in a reasonable length of time.

"Secondly, the technique of many procedures is so elaborate that it cannot be carried out well in the home, as evidenced, for example, by the decreasing number of operations in the home.

"And, thirdly, the hospital offers the best opportunity for study, for testing old methods, and developing better ones."

That higher standards of preliminary and theoretical instruction can best be secured in a specially organized and equipped nursing college is a point that has been recognized by advanced teachers among nurses for a number of years, but that such instruction shall in any way take the place of a systematic hospital training is against the opinion of those most competent to judge.

The college course should be a preparation for hospital experience, and it is that hospital experience which is the essential feature of any nurse's education. Work in the homes of rich or poor should, we believe, always follow prolonged hospital training.

It is for the nurses of New England and the country at large to see to it that valuable time is not lost by following false and unwise methods of training in the new college at Harvard.

Public opinion is the most powerful factor for or against any movement of the age in which we live.

A TIMELY SUBJECT

MRS. KINNEY's paper, published in this issue, entitled "Some Questionable Nursing Schools and What they are Doing," deals with a subject of grave importance to nurses everywhere.

The great nursing body is striving by every means in its power to provide better and more efficient care for the sick by improving standards of education for nurses, and with this end in view has come the movement for State registration, preliminary training, an effort for central preliminary schools, etc., and with the increased effort of nurses

for the elevation of their own profession comes a movement from another group of people which is cheapening and degrading nursing education and standards.

Correspondence schools and short-course schools for nurses are in direct opposition to all the ideals that the nursing profession has for its own advancement.

We endorse all that Mrs. Kinney has said about them, and we only regret that, like Mrs. Kinney, we are unable to suggest a remedy that shall be direct in its influence for their control. State registration will eventually have its influence, but there will always be, we fear, followers of any plan that promises a short cut to success. It is the innocent who suffer because of their ignorance whom we should endeavor to protect.

THE NEW LAW AFFECTS NURSES' REGISTRIES

THE attention of nurses, particularly in New York State, is called to an act of the last Legislature which took effect on May 1 and is now being put into force. This act "regulates the keeping of employment agencies in cities of the first and second class where fees are charged for securing employment or situations."

The act is the result of investigations made by Miss Frances A. Kellor and a staff of assistants into the conduct of these agencies, and the conditions disclosed are in the main disheartening. It is shown that a girl who avails herself of an employment agency may be exposing herself to almost everything that can injure character, and she is often-times shamelessly cheated. On the other hand, some agencies are entirely honest and straightforward, and cannot be brought to believe that kindred establishments are of a dubious character.

Nearly all these employment agencies have nurses trained and untrained on their books, and one proprietor recently in refusing to pay the license fee of twenty-five dollars claimed that a nurses' boarding-house was conducted in which no fees were charged, but the nurses paid fifteen dollars a week for board.

This law affects the cities of New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Syracuse, and Utica, and has been interpreted to cover all hospital and training-school registries where fees are charged, and all nurses' homes and registries. This does not include those conducted by alumnae societies where the annual dues entitle to other privileges besides the registry.

Every licensed person or corporation must keep a register, approved by the Mayor, in which must be entered the date of every application

for employment, name and address of applicant, and fee charged, and these registers shall be open during office hours to inspection by the Mayor. A receipt must be given for every fee charged, having printed on the back a copy of the section (5) with regard to fees.

It will be interesting to watch what action nurses themselves, as a result of this law, will take towards the further management of their own affairs.

Since the law went into effect the New York Academy of Medicine has discontinued its nurses' registry, and the Mills Training-School Alumnae Association has organized one in connection with a club-house.

We hope this new law will be the means of placing all nurses' registries in the hands of the alumnae associations or county clubs.

THE REGISTRATION ACT IN NEW YORK

WE publish on another page a letter from M. A. M., in which the opinion of nurses is asked in regard to the justice of that article of the New York statute which refuses registration to nurses in good standing because the schools from which they graduated years ago are not up to the standards required by the Regents to-day.

This is a matter to which the Nurse Board of Examiners have been giving much careful consideration. That the act is unjust to a few nurses has been shown from the first, but to what extent it is unjust is difficult to determine until greater numbers of nurses have filed their application with the Regents at Albany.

It will be remembered that when the New York bill was first discussed the statement was made in this JOURNAL and in the State meetings that all graduate nurses in good standing would be eligible for registration without examination, and that was the intention of the New York State association from the beginning, but when it came to the point of framing a bill that would meet the educational and political requirements in the State, that had to be considered, the act as it was passed was quite a different instrument from the bill that was in the beginning contemplated. That it is a splendid statute in all but that one particular all must admit who have true nursing standards at heart, but that it is unjust to a special class of women is becoming more and more clearly recognized.

We can say with authority that the Executive Committee of the New York State Nurses' Association is already taking steps to remedy this one condition of the act. Plans will be outlined for the consideration of the members at the April meeting of the State association, and

undoubtedly action will be taken looking towards an amendment which will give recognition to those nurses whose schools cannot be registered, but who are otherwise eligible.

In the registration acts of the other professions—medicine, pharmacy, etc.—special amendments have been found necessary upon just such lines. The State association before it can take any action, however, must have facts and figures to present to the Legislature before it can ask for an amendment.

In order that evidence may be at hand, every nurse who desires to be registered should file her application in the Regents' office at Albany. Let these applications show just how many hundreds of nurses in good standing are being excluded by the failure of their schools to comply with the standards necessary for registration.

We are inclined to think that carelessness and procrastination have more to do with the slowness of nurses to apply for registration than any real opposition to the act. The work is now going steadily forward. Twenty schools were registered during October and November, which released a large number of the one hundred and thirty-two applications reported October 1 as being held for the registration of the schools.

We would like to hear from the other States where registration is in operation. It would be interesting to our readers to know what the difficulties are, if any, and to what extent conditions are alike in different sections of the country.

THE PRACTICAL EXAMINATION.

Nurses who are intending to make application for the January examination in practical nursing need to send to the Nursing Section, Education Department, Albany, N. Y., at once. The same address should be used by those wishing registration blanks for individuals or training-schools.

PROGRESS OF STATE REGISTRATION

THE annual meeting of the New Jersey State Nurses' Association was held in Newark on December 6. Miss Gardner was reelected president. There were about one hundred and twenty members present. Miss S. F. Palmer spoke informally on the importance of uniformity of standards of education in the registration laws of all the States, urging upon the members the need of amending the New Jersey statute so that it should include the best in the acts of the two adjoining States, New York and Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania State Nurses' Association held a special meeting

on December 17 in Pittsburg for the purpose of discussing the bill to be presented to the Legislature this winter.

Maryland and Virginia held meetings at the end of December, reports of which will be given in full in February.

The Massachusetts nurses will make a determined effort to secure favorable legislation this winter. A mass meeting is to be held in January.

NURSES' JOURNAL OF THE PACIFIC COAST

As we close our pages the first number of the *Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast* comes to hand.

We welcome another journal into the field that is "owned, edited, and managed by nurses." With the Pacific journal joining forces with THE AMERICAN JOURNAL for the uplifting of nursing standards, progress in all lines of education and registration must be advanced.

The magazine makes an exceedingly handsome appearance, is well edited and printed, and is a great credit to the nursing profession.

THE NEW YEAR

THE new year promises to be one of exceptional success to the JOURNAL with the awakened interest of the alumnae associations in the JOURNAL management. Many of the associations are taking shares of stock in the JOURNAL Company and some are considering increasing the annual dues to include the JOURNAL. This was the original plan, and when it is brought about we can publish a larger magazine with unlimited space.

To all those working in the JOURNAL's interest we send wishes for great success in all their efforts, and to our friends and readers everywhere a Happy New Year.

